



The President's Daily Brief

18 June 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Fighting seems to have tapered off in most parts of South Vietnam following the new cease-fire. (Page 1)

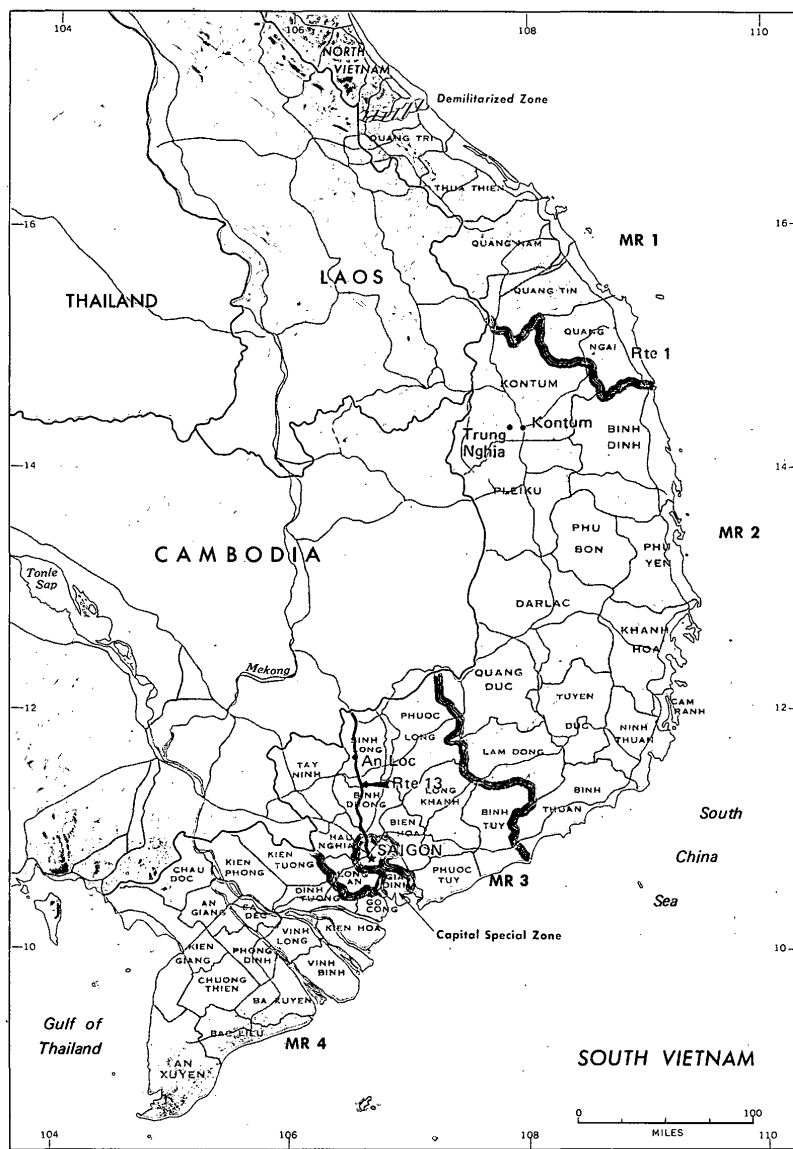
In Laos, Prime Minister Souvanna is ready to make concessions on several issues that have held up talks with the Communists since February. (Page 2)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Fighting appears to have tapered off throughout most of the country. Both sides have instructed their units to honor the new cease-fire. Each remains skeptical of the other's intentions, however, and both have told their forces to remain vigilant and defend areas they control.

Military action in the delta yesterday fell off significantly from Saturday, although government commanders consider heavy rains partly responsible. The provinces around Saigon have been quiet since the start of the new cease-fire, and government sources report that all roads are open except Route 13 to An Loc.

Sharp fighting continues in Kontum Province. South Vietnamese units trying to recapture Trung Nghia village, which the Communists occupied on June 9, are taking heavy casualties. Despite the losses, the government commander has ordered operations to continue until the village is secured.

Some fighting is still under way in southern MR-1. South Vietnamese units are probing contested areas in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces and the Communists are reacting with shellings and ground attacks. Fighting could escalate as the South Vietnamese try to consolidate their control near Route 1.

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LAOS

Government chief negotiator Pheng Phongsavan described as "productive" his meeting with Communist envoy Phoumi Vongvichit on June 15--the first since the signing of the Paris communiqué. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has called on the two delegates to complete negotiations by July 1, and has told them to come to him if they reach an impasse on any specific point. Phoumi has agreed to try to meet Souvanna's deadline.

Souvanna is ready to make concessions on several issues that have held up talks since February. At the session on June 15, the government accepted some of the Pathet Lao demands on portfolios in a new coalition. Souvanna is also prepared to concede on provisions for the security of Pathet Lao members of a new coalition, on the size of the International Control Commission, and on the demarcation of areas of control.

Souvanna presumably hopes that these concessions will keep negotiations moving and that in the wake of the Paris talks, the Communists will also show some flexibility.

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NOTES

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USSR: The unmanned Soyuz spacecraft launched from Tyuratam last Friday returned to earth yesterday morning. The last unmanned Soyuz mission, conducted in June 1972, lasted six days.

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